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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMBURGER (Netherlands)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (A/51/3 (Part II), A/51/87, A/51/131, A/51/208-S/1996/543, A/51/210, A/51/211-S/1996/551, A/51/295, A/51/357, A/51/462-S/1996/831, A/51/475)

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (A/51/312)

(d) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (A/51/354)

(e) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (A/51/484)

(f) INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (A/51/186-E/1996/80)

1. Mr. JUMA (Executive Secretary of the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing the report of the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/51/312), said the fact that over 162 countries and the European Union had ratified the Convention was proof of the importance they attached to it. The second meeting had signalled the beginning of implementation of the Convention's principles. In that regard, the work of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, covering issues such as the establishment of the clearing house mechanism for technical and scientific cooperation, and ways to promote and facilitate access to, and transfer and development of technology, was particularly worthy of note.

2. Significant contributions had also been made to advancing international environmental law, particularly through the establishment of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Biosafety which had subsequently considered issues relating to access to genetic resources, with emphasis on the formulation of national legislation, administrative procedures and policy measures aimed at implementing article 15 of the Convention.

3. One of the most important aspects of the second meeting was the preparation and presentation to the Conference of the Parties of national strategies and action plans and national reports on the implementation of the Convention. The secretariat of the Convention believed that such national reports would provide the basis for the future implementation of the Convention. Decisions pertaining to guidance to the Global Environment Facility had been adopted while the secretariat of the Convention had been instructed to further explore the possibility of securing additional financial resources and to report to the parties on how they could have access to such resources.

4. Particular emphasis had been placed on the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity-related conventions, institutions and processes. Pursuant to the decisions of the Conference of the parties concerning relationships with other bodies, the secretariat had entered into arrangements with other global biodiversity-related conventions, and was

exploring the possibility of establishing cooperation with the Commission on Sustainable Development as well as other intergovernmental institutions working in the area of biological diversity, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The secretariat would also continue to cooperate with the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, to which it had submitted a number of reports as part of the contribution of the Convention on Biological Diversity to other processes under United Nations auspices.

5. With regard to administrative matters, the headquarters of the secretariat had been relocated from Geneva to Montreal, as agreed upon by the Parties in Jakarta.

6. Mr. GALVARRO (Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Rio Group, said that the Rio Group attached the utmost importance to the preservation of biological diversity and to the strengthening and expansion of initiatives in that field. In that connection, the Group fully endorsed the purposes and goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

7. The members of the Rio Group, like other developing countries, took the view that international negotiations must be pursued in order to expand the commitments that had already been made under the Convention, particularly by developed countries. In that connection, at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties, substantial progress had been made on such sensitive issues as genetic resources, biosafety and the protection of traditional knowledge.

8. Countries in possession of genetic components had the right to establish appropriate and realistic criteria for gaining access to them. No restrictions must be imposed in that area, and all must strive to create appropriate conditions to facilitate access to those materials in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. It was also essential to guarantee fair value for genetic components. In that regard, a major step forward had been made by the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties in the form of its decision II/11. Concerning the renegotiation within the framework of FAO of an international undertaking on plant genetic resources, the Rio Group favoured the position that the renegotiated undertaking should be consistent with the principles enshrined in the Convention on Biological Diversity.

9. With regard to the negotiation of a protocol on biosafety to regulate the transboundary movements of genetically modified organisms, the Rio Group wished to reiterate that the objective of that instrument was limited to the transboundary movements of the organisms concerned. The use and handling of such organisms must continue to be regulated solely by national legislation.

10. While the Rio Group was aware of the major difficulties in achieving greater openness which would lead to the acknowledgement of the rights to intellectual property of the indigenous and local communities, significant strides must be made in that arena in order to close the wide gaps with respect to the sustainable use of genetic resources.

11. He hoped that the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties would focus, among other things, on financial cooperation and technology. It would also be advisable for the Convention, like other environmental conventions, to have a scientific component.

12. Mr. JUMA (Executive Secretary of the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity) said that the comments made by the representative of Bolivia confirmed the comprehensive nature of the Convention on Biological Diversity and made it an ideal international legal instrument for implementing the objectives of sustainable development. The Convention was expected to continue evolving in that direction. However, its success would depend largely on the ability of countries to fulfil their obligations in terms of technology transfers and financial resources. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties had emphasized the growing importance of regional cooperation, especially with respect to financial resources and technology, themes most likely to emerge as key issues at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties. While the text of the Convention had put emphasis on North-South relationships, the decisions that had been adopted thus far indicated a more complex relationship between the parties. In his view, the Convention provided a dynamic basis upon which countries could experiment with new ways of working together.

13. Mr. DE MOURA (Brazil) said that, as small island developing countries were particularly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change and sea level rise, his delegation supported all initiatives to deal with the impact of climate change on those countries. Climate change had a serious adverse impact on coastal populations and on tourism, the main economic activity of many small island developing States. Noting that biological diversity was also critically important to those States, he recalled that the international community had still not prepared a vulnerability index for them.

14. The issue of climate change must be the highest priority on the international community's environmental agenda. Greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by 50 to 70 per cent. Limiting emissions to their 1990 levels was not good enough. The concentration of such gases in the atmosphere was the result of industrial activity in the developed countries over the previous 150 years. That was why the Convention had stressed the concept of common but differentiated responsibility. In his view, industrialized countries should play a leading role in reducing such emissions instead of trying to reinterpret the concept of joint implementation as defined in the Convention. He therefore welcomed the reiteration by the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Climate Change of the need to implement the commitments set out in the Convention, and the new political impetus given to the Berlin Mandate to pursue the negotiation of an additional protocol to the Convention with the aim of increasing the obligations of the developed countries after the year 2000. That meeting had also adopted the Geneva Ministerial Declaration which, inter alia, stressed the need for more specific policies designed to mitigate climate change. All signatories to the Convention should make concrete efforts to successfully conclude the negotiations in the context of the Berlin Mandate.

15. Owing to the relevance of the issue, a report focusing on progress achieved so far and emphasizing the issue of energy, in particular new and renewable sources of energy, should be submitted to the special session of the General Assembly, which inter alia, would review the implementation of Agenda 21.

16. Mr. RUFFING (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its fourth session, had already called upon the international community to support the efforts of small island developing States to adapt to the sea level rise that would be experienced as a result of the greenhouse gases that had already been emitted into the atmosphere. That explained by the Commission's report did not provide details about discussions by the parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which were well aware that small island developing States had been calling for more stringent limits on greenhouse gas emissions within a specific time-frame.

17. With regard to the vulnerability index, the secretariat of the Decade regretted that, owing to resource constraints, it had not been possible to make rapid progress in that area since the holding of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 1994. However, the secretariat had been in close contact with other groups, such as the Commonwealth Secretariat and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which had begun work in that area.

18. At the previous meeting, the question had been raised as to whether or not the secretariat had identified a positive increase in tangible assistance received by small island developing States as a result of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. Quantitative evidence had showed that there had actually been a decline in aid flows to such States during the period 1991-1994, and no data was currently available on the amount of aid since that period. However, many international organizations had established many programmes and projects intended to facilitate the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action.

19. With regard to the effectiveness of programmes to implement the Barbados Programme of Action, he said that policy frameworks, which led to the implementation of particular policy instruments, still needed to be put in place. Policy instruments in turn took time to manifest themselves in economic, social and environmental indicators. The data that would indicate whether or not those indicators had improved arrived with an even greater time lag. It had therefore been impossible to gauge the actual effectiveness of the measures that had been taken so far. The Committee's reports had recorded a very large number of initiatives taken by individual countries with the support of the international community, international organizations and bilateral agencies. Such initiatives had addressed a great deal of programme areas identified in the Barbados Programme of Action. The areas of the Programme of Action that had not received much attention were indicated in the Secretary-General's report.

20. Mrs. des ILES (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the countries of the Alliance of Small Island States hoped that, in consultation with the Division for Sustainable Development, the Small Island Developing States Unit would be able

to place greater emphasis on analytical work in relation to the Barbados Plan of Action.

21. Mr. MAHUGU (Kenya) said that the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity had been hindered by a lack of meaningful transfer of technology from North to South and a lack of adequate and predictable resources. It was clear that some partners in the North seemed to be dragging their feet on those issues. Any meaningful implementation of the Convention by developing countries would depend on how willing the North was to fulfil its obligations. The resources of any nation formed part of its wealth, and it was therefore conceivable that any arrangement must include value-added in order to compensate for the suppliers of the raw materials. Those shortcomings in the implementation of the Convention should be expeditiously resolved so that progress could be made towards the next stage of sustainable development.

22. The safe handling, transfer and use of living modified organisms was of critical importance to Kenya. That was why his delegation strongly supported the activities of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Biosafety. The speedy completion of the ongoing negotiations on a protocol on biosafety would be a major step towards the implementation of the Convention, and his delegation appealed to the international community to give its full support to the negotiations. To that end, his delegation called upon those States that had not yet ratified the Convention to expedite their internal procedures for ratification, acceptance or approval.

23. Owing to the North's rigidity with respect to transfer of technology, adequate and predictable funding and the drafting of a protocol on biosafety, the developing countries' expectations concerning the sustainable use and development of biological resources were fading. In order for a true partnership to develop, it was important that a fair and equitable sharing of benefits should be the rule rather than the exception.

24. Issues related to intellectual property rights must take into account the origin of the biological resources; that underscored the importance of discussing in detail in situ and ex situ collections. Of course, each sovereign State had a right to decide what to do with its raw materials. International partnership must duly recognize the immense role that such supply of biological resources had contributed to the development of biotechnology. It was only fair and logical that the huge benefits accruing from the use of biotechnologies should be equitably shared for the common good of the planet.

25. In its resolution 49/100, the General Assembly had adopted specific measures in favour of small island developing States. It had been observed that options for such States were very limited. For example, it had been stated that small island developing States faced a myriad of threats, which included sea level rise, flooding, hurricanes and adverse climatic conditions. Those threats made it very difficult for small island States to develop unless they received assistance from the international community. His delegation fully supported the efforts that had been made by small island developing States to introduce a protocol focusing on their peculiar conditions. In view of the urgency and seriousness of the matter, his delegation strongly appealed to the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change to hasten the approval and final

adoption of that important protocol when it came up for discussion at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in 1997.

26. Miss BAI YONG JIE (China) said that the principle of common and differentiated responsibility and the principle of equity should guide Member States in the implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Under the Convention, the developed countries should, before the year 2000, strive to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels. They also had the obligation to provide developing countries with the necessary resources and technology. Unfortunately, most developed countries had failed to honour their commitments, which had had a negative effect on the implementation of the Convention. Her delegation called for the formulation of legal instruments that set forth the developed countries' obligations. During that process, the developed countries should not impose new obligations on the developing countries or create any new trade barriers.

27. In China, the per capita level of greenhouse gas emissions was very low. The level of CO_2 was less than half the world level and was only one sixth to one tenth of the level of such emissions in developed countries. Nevertheless, her delegation was aware that climate change was a global issue and required the efforts of the entire international community.

28. China had been one of the first countries to ratify the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Chinese Government had formulated its own Agenda 21. In accordance with the provisions of the Convention, China had taken legal and technical steps to slow the increase of CO_2 emission levels and achieve the objectives of the Convention.

29. The implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action had been unsatisfactory and had not provided sufficient support to small island developing States. The international community, especially the developed countries, should help such States overcome the difficulties they faced as a result of climate change, sea level rise and a lack of resources and technology.

30. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/236 on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the number of disasters that had taken place worldwide had been reduced. Various United Nations development agencies had played an important role in reducing natural disasters, and her delegation hoped that, within the next four years, the international community would continue to cooperate in order to achieve the goals of the Decade.

31. Mr. KASRI (Indonesia) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

32. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Jakarta from 6 to 17 November 1995, had offered a unique opportunity to implement the Convention. In the light of the Jakarta Ministerial Statement on the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, there was a critical need for the Conference of the Parties to address the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biological

diversity. His delegation also urged the parties to initiate immediate action to implement the decisions adopted on that subject.

33. With respect to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, his delegation reiterated the importance of the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration at the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Annex I parties' national communications would have to include two major components. The first concerned commitments with respect to limiting and reducing greenhouse emissions, and related policies and measures. The second dealt with commitments with respect to financial resources and technology transfer. His delegation was concerned at the results of the review of the first national communications of Annex I parties indicated that the countries with higher emissions of greenhouse gases expected their emissions by the year 2000 to be above their 1990 level. That would not contribute to the objectives of the Convention.

34. In general, his delegation could support the report of the Secretary-General on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (A/51/186-E/1996/80) and it was grateful for the clarity with which the status of implementation of the Yokohama Plan of Action had been presented. The numerous initiatives in the field of natural disaster reduction were evidence of the vitality with which natural disaster awareness was being incorporated into mainstream activities.

35. His delegation welcomed the initiatives of Canada on the International Framework of Action for the Decade as well as the Pan-Pacific Conference on Natural Hazards, held in Vancouver in 1996. It also welcomed the initiatives of Japan which, together with its partners in Asia, was striving to improve disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation on the basis of the lessons learned from the Kobe earthquake tragedy.

36. Natural disaster hazards often had an intrinsic relationship with human-induced phenomena, such as technological or ecological conditions, which had an adverse impact on the environment. In keeping with General Assembly resolution 50/117 B, his delegation reaffirmed the importance of the transfer of technologies related to early-warning capacities to mitigate natural disasters in developing countries, under the auspices of the United Nations and the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action.

37. The international community's commitment to the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction must be translated into concrete support through the adequate provision of human and financial resources, as well as equitable access to protection from natural disaster, which must be guaranteed to both developing and developed countries.

38. Small island developing States were particularly vulnerable to cyclones, hurricanes and floods. His delegation therefore urged the Committee to adopt the draft resolution on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction as a reflection of the solidarity forged by the international community with the peoples and countries that suffered from such natural disasters.

39. Mr. KURODA (Department of Humanitarian Affairs) said that natural disaster reduction should be a constant concern of the international community and should not become the centre of attention only when natural disasters occurred.

40. Mr. ESPERI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was a matter of grave concern that the developed countries, which accounted for the highest emissions of greenhouse gases, had not fulfilled their commitments under the Framework Convention on Climate Change. With respect to the transfer of technology and provision of financial resources, those countries had done even less. The objectives of the Convention would be realized, to a large extent, provided that the Annex I parties to the Convention met their commitments under the Convention in a comprehensive manner. The effective implementation of the Convention would depend on the provision of financial resources, transfer of technology and the acknowledgement that economic and social development and poverty eradication were the first and overriding priorities of the developing countries that were parties to the Convention.

41. The selective approach in dealing with the reports of the technical and scientific subsidiary machinery of the Conference of the Parties should be avoided. Such an approach might be counterproductive in that it might not only undermine the necessity of the comprehensive implementation of the Convention but also affect the scientific basis of proposals and measures built upon it.

42. In the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, particular consideration should be given to capacity-building, development of infrastructure, financial resources, transfer of technologies and know-how. His delegation welcomed the negotiations on a protocol on biosafety with a view to its finalization before the end of 1998. The guidance of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Buenos Aires in November 1996, would help the Open-ended Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Biosafety pursue its mandate.

43. His delegation considered that the clearing-house mechanism could be used not only for exchange of information but also for technology transfer, as well as a means of promoting human resources development. However, the effective use of that mechanism required the possession of advanced information technologies.

44. With regard to the question of funding, the resources of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) fell far short of expectations and requirements for the implementation of the conventions for which the Facility acted as the interim financial mechanism. His delegation was in favour of simplified, shortened and expedited procedures for project cycle and approval in order to facilitate the access of recipient countries to GEF resources. Adequate replenishment of resources was also of crucial importance to meet the objectives of the Rio Conference.

45. Natural disasters resulted not only in the loss of human lives but also in major physical and economic damage, in particular in developing countries. Urgent measures were required to reduce the vulnerability of such countries to natural hazards. As a country that was seriously affected by natural disasters, the Islamic Republic of Iran believed that the transfer of early-warning

technologies to developing countries was a crucial element for improvements in early-warning capacities and required special attention.

46. Mr. JUMA (Executive Secretary of the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity) said that the concerns expressed by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran had been reflected in the agenda of the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Conference had paid special attention to building the initial capacity necessary for the implementation of the Convention, and specific guidance had been issued to the Global Environment Facility to support what was generally referred to as "enabling activities". That was linked to the implementation of article 6 of the Convention, which dealt with national strategies and action plans, and the report that would be submitted by the parties to the Convention would provide a basis for determining the level of support needed for capacity-building. The Facility had already begun to support such activities, and its report would be discussed at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Facility's report also contained information on the degree to which GEF had begun to simplify the project cycle and facilitate the disbursement of financial resources.

47. Mr. FLORES (Honduras), also speaking on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama, expressed the support of the Central American countries for the statement delivered by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China and the Geneva Ministerial Declaration of the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Central American countries fully supported the summit on sustainable development, to be held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in December 1996. Both the developed and the developing nations had contributed to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the mobilization of the necessary financial resources, the transfer of technology and the implementation of international environmental strategies would be helped by the fact that so many countries had ratified, inter alia, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal.

48. The Alliance for Sustainable Development, established in 1994, had formulated a regional strategy for environmental protection. The environment had also been a continuing theme of Central American consultations and initiatives. In that connection, a number of regional programmes had been designed to comply with the provisions of Agenda 21 and to achieve sustainable development in Central America. Examples included the establishment of the Central American Commission on Environment and Development and the public policy reforms implemented in individual countries.

49. Honduras had implemented programmes on reforestation, water protection, soil conservation and efficient land use. It also conducted a wide-ranging public information programme.

50. Lastly, on behalf of the Central American countries, Honduras wished to thank all those countries, United Nations programmes and non-governmental organizations which had helped the region to achieve some of its goals relating to the environment.

51. Mr. GRAY (Australia) said that Australia, a biologically diverse country, hoped that the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity would help to resolve disagreements over provisions of the Convention which were vital to its effective implementation. Australia also hoped that the meeting would generate proposals concerning monitoring, identification and assessment of biodiversity, and that it would address the global shortage of taxonomists.

52. Australia appreciated the contributions of Member States, both in cash and in kind, to the Open-ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, which was attempting to forge a consensus on action for the proper management, conservation and sustainable use of the world's forests. It was pleased to have been able to contribute to the Panel's work by hosting an international conference on certification and labelling in Brisbane earlier in 1996.

53. His delegation welcomed the action taken by Governments in the past year on environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, outlined in chapter 19 of Agenda 21. Australia had been pleased to host the Second Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety in Canberra held in March 1996, which had achieved progress in the development of national profiles for the management of chemicals and organic pollutants, and in accelerating international assessment of chemical risks. Continued work in that field should focus on building national capacities on recognizing the need for the use of chemicals as a component of development and on taking into account the different conditions prevailing in different countries.

54. In seeking to fulfil its commitments under the Framework Convention on Climate Change, Australia had developed a national greenhouse gas abatement strategy, which was currently under review.

55. His delegation was confident that a long-term strategy for dealing with climate change could be arrived at through the current Berlin Mandate negotiations. The burden of addressing global climate change must be shared equitably; that could be achieved by differentiating between countries' respective emissions limitation and reduction objectives according to individual circumstances. An active participant in the Antarctic Treaty system, Australia encouraged remaining Antarctic Treaty consultative parties to ratify the Madrid Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty at the earliest possible date.

56. Australia, an island nation, Australia attached great importance to the conservation and sustainable management of the world's oceans. It supported the efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to implement the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and its Regional Seas Programme, particularly in the Asia and Pacific regions. It was a founding member of the International Coral Reefs Initiative and was the host country for its secretariat. Australia would make

every effort to ensure that the issue of the survival of coral reefs was addressed at the regional level in the next two years. Australia had also been active in marine resource management at the regional level through its participation in the South Pacific Forum and its implementation of the outcomes of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. It had participated in efforts to implement the Barbados Programme of Action in the South Pacific and had incorporated Barbados priorities into its bilateral and regional development assistance programme. It hoped that the international community, donors and small island developing States would do likewise.

57. The review of Agenda 21 in 1997 must not attempt to rewrite it or renegotiate decisions already made but rather provide an opportunity to identify priority sectoral issues that required follow-up at the international level. It would be crucial to take into account the outcomes of other United Nations conferences and to avoid duplication with the work carried out in other international forums. The special session should concentrate on future activities and on gaps in the international agenda. It should focus on a number of key areas, including oceans; freshwater resources; land degradation; new and innovative sources of funding, particularly from the private sector; environmental indicators; and forests. The issues taken up should be relevant to the broader community, and follow-up activities should be participatory, transparent and accessible to all stakeholders. At the institutional level, the role of all United Nations organizations should be reassessed with a view to eliminating duplication and using resources more efficiently. His delegation reaffirmed its support for the Commission on Sustainable Development as the primary international body coordinating action on sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21.

58. Mr. PRENDERGAST (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the 13 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), endorsed the statements delivered by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China and by the Chairperson of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). He took note of the report of the Secretary-General on action taken at the international, regional and national levels to implement the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/51/354).

59. The States members of CARICOM recognized sustainable development as a primary objective in implementing the Programme of Action. Regional activities undertaken in that connection had been characterized by promotion of the Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action; promotion of acceptance of the region's peculiar vulnerability and its need for special attention in order to achieve sustainable development; mobilization and allocation of resources in support of initiatives taken under the Programme of Action; arrangements for coordinated implementation of the Programme of Action; and analysis and elaboration of future action.

60. While the small island developing states in CARICOM accepted primary responsibility for implementing the Programme of Action, international support was nonetheless required in order to deal with such factors as climate change and sea level rise, natural and environmental disasters, management of waste, coastal and marine resources, biodiversity and science and technology.

International assistance was also needed for human resource development, building environmental institutions and administrative capacity, and technical cooperation.

61. The Caribbean region had promoted the Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action in several forums. CARICOM was seeking to implement it through consultative forums throughout the Caribbean region and through its secretariat. Efforts had been made to improve public awareness and to speed up the implementation of the Programme of Action. Referring to the critical role of information and technology, he thanked the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for its assistance in carrying out feasibility studies for the establishment of the information network for small island developing States (SIDSNET) and the technical assistance programme (SIDSTAP). The States members of CARICOM had selected natural and environmental resources, management of waste, land resources, regional institutions and technical cooperation as priority areas in the implementation of the Programme of Action. Efforts were being made to establish a full database of ongoing and proposed projects and programmes in the region. Preliminary data collected by the economic commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) showed that the Caribbean States were involved in a broad range of activities. A Caribbean review meeting, held in May 1995, had designated CARICOM and the secretariats of ECLAC and the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) to coordinate activities on an interim basis.

62. He drew attention to a number of efforts undertaken by UNEP, Habitat, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Inter-american Development Bank (IDB) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to assist small island States in implementing the Programme of Action. In particular, he wished to note a GEF project in the Caribbean entitled "Planning for adaptation to climate change". Under the project, a Regional Project Implementation Unit would be established at the Centre for Environment and Development of the University of the West Indies. The project was designed to address global climate change through vulnerability assessment, adaptation planning, information-gathering and capacity-building. CARICOM also looked forward to reviewing the findings of the 1996 study commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat on the measurement of the vulnerability of small States, and in the expert group meeting to be convened in 1996-1997 by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development on the vulnerability index in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and other organizations. In conclusion, he wished to commend UNDP for preparing the "Directory of Institutions and Experts in Small Island Developing States".

63. Mr. RUFFING (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) welcomed the statement by the Jamaican representative on behalf of CARICOM, and, in particular, the practical initiatives he had outlined, such as the project database. In the Caribbean, South Pacific and elsewhere, a portfolio of well-defined projects and programmes would greatly facilitate the holding of donor consultations, proposed by AOSIS, to mobilize resources for small island developing States. He also welcomed efforts to harmonize environmental policies at the regional level, as described in the Honduran statement delivered on behalf of the Central American countries. He wondered whether a similar initiative was under way in the Caribbean region.

64. Mr. Rae Kwon CHUNG (Republic of Korea) said that, as a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Republic of Korea had adopted a wide range of policies to increase energy efficiency. However, he believed that the Convention's selection of a particular base year, namely 1990, raised questions concerning equity and compromised economic growth in some countries. The current fixed quantitative target should be complemented by flexible qualitative targets aimed at increasing energy efficiency over time. The Framework Convention would most likely be more widely accepted as a result. In that connection, the innovative formula known as "Business as Usual Minus X", proposed by the Australian delegation at the second session of the Conference of the Parties, should be carefully analysed. His delegation hoped that the flexible qualitative approach would be considered by the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate, to be held in December 1996.

65. His delegation also hoped that progress could be achieved in balancing the need for conservation and benefit-sharing during the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It welcomed the work of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on Biosafety concerning living modified organisms and looked forward to the early adoption of a relevant protocol. His delegation viewed the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction as a success. The United Nations should continue to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action. In conclusion, his delegation supported the Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action and believed that the special situation and environmental vulnerability of small island States deserved special recognition. It also supported the endorsement by the General Assembly of decision 4/16 of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The review of the vulnerability index by the Commission at its fifth session in 1997 could provide an important opportunity for rationalizing and coordinating global action.

66. Ms. MILLER (Malta) said that, as an island State, Malta was sensitive to many of the issues highlighted at the Rio and Barbados conferences. Sustainable management of its coastal and marine areas was of paramount importance, given its dependence on its marine environment for tourism, shipping, fishing, water supply and recreation. Strains on the environment and infrastructure caused by rapid expansion in tourism were being counterbalanced by careful management through a policy of focusing on qualitative rather than quantitative growth. Moreover, Malta had made extensive improvements in the area of waste management, sewage treatment and recycling, and had established the year 2000 as the target date for ending untreated sewage flows into the sea. Investment in human resources through education was a cornerstone of national environmental policy, and the University of Malta had introduced a number of courses in environmental science, planning and management. A national strategy on environmental education was contributing to increased awareness among the public of its own responsibility for conservation.

67. Malta had been in the forefront of efforts to raise international awareness of the negative effects of climate change for coastal areas and small island States. Transboundary pollution was another matter of great concern, especially for Mediterranean States. Malta had contributed in that sphere by sponsoring training courses on pollution control in the Mediterranean. It looked forward

to the endorsement by the General Assembly of the Washington Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and its subsequent implementation.

68. The strengthening of information management capabilities through the further development of SIDSNET should be encouraged. Her delegation appreciated the inclusion of the development of a vulnerability index for small island developing States as part of the work programme for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. Solutions to common environmental problems at the national level were best served by an integrated regional approach, and Malta had taken an active role in the establishment of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development.

69. Mr. KAID (Yemen) said that international strategies for natural disaster reduction should be translated into practical action by developing national capacities with a view to protecting local communities and alleviating daily suffering. He affirmed the threat which natural disasters posed to humankind and the environment in developed and developing countries alike and added that international cooperation for development, including natural disaster reduction, would strengthen economic growth and a healthy environment.

70. Sustainable development and its prerequisites, which were a concern of developing countries, called for concerted national and international efforts and the fulfilment of commitments by donor States in balanced and equal partnership. It was also essential to identify new issues that required the attention of the Commission on Sustainable Development, such as the evaluation of consumption and production patterns, which encompassed environmental and economic factors relevant to sustainable development.

71. Although his country had achieved considerable progress in economic reform, it was experiencing numerous problems on account of the measures adopted and therefore needed international cooperation in order to continue along the path towards sustainable development. It also needed international support to ensure the success of environmental protection measures which it had introduced.

72. The environmental problems faced by developing countries were attributable to measures implemented in their respect by the developed countries, such as protectionism and denial of access to high technology, which impeded development and were instrumental in creating an unhealthy environment. Moreover, the developing countries were currently so burdened by debt that they had difficulty in channelling their energies towards sustainable development, a situation which was further aggravated by the ever diminishing amounts of aid. The decisions taken at various conferences, notably the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, should be implemented and the undertakings made to developing countries fulfilled, while creditors should seek prompt solutions to the debt problems of developing countries, particularly in Africa, through bilateral agreement or the Paris Club.

73. His delegation hoped that the 1997 special session of the General Assembly, aimed at reviewing the progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, would culminate in practical proposals for development, as well as strengthen the role of developing countries and assist

them in managing the environment and building national capacities in that field; the onus was on the developed countries to aid the development of such States. Degradation of the environment would undermine the health and prosperity of future generations and restrict the role of large urban centres as a driving force in economic development. One of the objectives was therefore to assess the impact of environmental pollution in that connection.

74. Mr. WEIBGEN (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that FAO intended to participate actively in the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, by reporting on developments at its fourth International Technical Conference, where Governments had renewed their commitment to the conservation, sustainable utilization and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of plant genetic resources and the need for increased food supplies and sustainable agricultural production.

75. Agriculture was the backbone of island economies, and with a view to assisting small island States in implementing Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action, FAO had established subregional offices for the Pacific and the Caribbean and a subregional programme for sustainable development in agriculture, forestry and fisheries to assist Governments in policy review, institutional development, ecosystem protection, human resource development and natural resource management.

76. With regard to the global climate, FAO had participated in the preparation of the "climate agenda" endorsed by the Coordinating Committee of the World Climate Programme. It aimed at better utilization of the resources available within the United Nations system by harmonizing activities for the reduction of the impact of climate-variability and increasing the resilience of climate-sensitive sectors.

77. With regard to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture continued to monitor food supply and demand conditions in all countries, with special in-depth reports on countries facing food emergencies. FAO was continuing its efforts to introduce the concept of drought management as a development strategy. It was cooperating in the development of new approaches to providing relief aid in a manner conducive to a rapid return to sustainable agricultural development in countries emerging from civil strife.

78. Mr. SHIBATA (Japan) said that no single issue had as truly a global scope and impact as global warming. Every nation and individual was vulnerable to its effects, and therefore no country had the right to pursue its own goals if to do so damaged the planet and its climate. Through the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the international community had taken the first step in arresting global warming. Although the level of carbon dioxide emissions in Japan in 1994 had exceeded the level in 1990, it was determined to make greater efforts to achieve the objectives of the Framework Convention by pursuing the full range of policies and measures in the Action Programme. As part of its contribution to the achievement of the goals of the Convention, Japan would host the third meeting of the Conference of Parties.

79. As an island State, Japan had taken an active part in the Barbados Conference. Among efforts to fulfil the commitments undertaken in the Barbados Programme of Action, Japan was contributing to the diversification of the economic base of small island developing States in the Pacific by assisting the South Pacific Forum to develop small-scale industry and energy systems. It also attached importance to the strengthening of its relations with Caribbean States and had established a regular consultation forum with CARICOM. It had agreed to cooperate with the CARICOM countries in such areas as disaster reduction and promotion of tourism.

80. Mr. BOUCHER (Barbados) said that his Government attached the highest importance to the successful implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. It was pleased that one of the most critical problems facing small island developing States, climate change and sea level rise, was being addressed by a project funded through the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

81. There had been a marked contrast between the sharply focused preparatory process for the recent series of global conferences and the fragmented and uncertain follow-up. During its review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Commission on Sustainable Development had referred constantly to the need for coordination, consultation and interaction. The Programme of Action was a critical step towards the goal of sustainable development for small island developing States. The challenge for those States and their partners was to identify and address the constraints which had hampered its implementation. Through the forthcoming review of Agenda 21 and the review process for the Barbados Conference to follow two years later, all its mechanisms must be revitalized to achieve the fullest possible implementation.

82. Mr. HADJ SADOK (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), in response to specific points raised by delegations, said that he joined the United States delegation in regretting that the report of the Secretary-General regarding the Framework Convention on Climate Change (A/51/484) had not been issued earlier, but it had been decided to wait in order to incorporate the results of the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties into the report. He noted with interest the proposals by the Russian Federation for a study of dangerous levels of concentration of greenhouse gases and for the establishment of a body for the implementation of article 13 of the Framework Convention.

83. Progress in the implementation of the Convention had been slow thus far, but he hoped for more rapid progress and tangible results especially after the forthcoming third meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Kyoto. Climate change was a subject of primary importance which affected the economic interests of many countries.

84. Mr. RUFFING (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that he had welcomed the spirit of dialogue on the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. The emphasis on regional initiatives was well taken, and much progress had been made in that area. He stressed the importance of an increased flow of information from the small island developing States to the Secretariat. Only five had yet reported to the Commission on Sustainable Development. Such reports were voluntary, but could be extremely useful, particularly in view of the fragmented follow-up to the Conference.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.